NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. Aug. 2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018

VLR 6/6/7
NRHP: 8/30/7

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Patrick Robert Sydnor Log Cabin

other names/site number Parker Sydnor Log Cabin; DHR File no. 058-5076

2. Location

street & number Wilbourne Road (Intersection of Routes 701 and 702) not for publication X

city or town Clarksville vicinity ___

state Virginia code VA county Mecklenburg code 117 zip code 23927

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M Catherine Slusser 7/17/2007

Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): ___

Signature of the Keeper ___

Date of Action ___

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Domestic	Sub:	Single Dwelling
	Secondary Structure		Animal storage facility
	Secondary Structure		Storage shed
	Secondary Structure		Privy

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Domestic	Sub:	Single Dwelling (Vacant)
	Secondary Structure		Not in use
	Secondary Structure		Not in use
	Secondary Structure		Not in use

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Third Quarter of the 19th century

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: wood
Roof: tin
Walls: sheetrock; log
Other:

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

__x__ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

__x__ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

__x__ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of plaster, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
____ B removed from its original location.
____ C a birthplace or a grave.
____ D a cemetery.
____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
____ F a commemorative property.
____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instruction

Social history
Ethnic heritage: African American
Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1865- 1950

Significant Person: Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor

Significant Dates: ca. 1865, 1888, ca. 1930, 1950

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
_x__ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: Mecklenburg County Clerk's Office, Boydton, VA; VDHR

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 4.41 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	719068	4059852	2	

____See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/title: Dr. Angelita D. Reyes
Address: 1930 East Dawn Drive
City: Tempe State AZ Zip Code 85284

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Dr. Angelita D. Reyes
Address: 1930 East Dawn Drive
City: Tempe State AZ Zip Code 85284

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary Description

The Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor Log Cabin, here after referred to as the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin, in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, is a one-and-one-half-story log building with a gable roof and a brick and stone chimney on the west end. The building was constructed ca. 1865, possibly earlier. The cabin and associated outbuildings occupy 4.41 acres as indicated on Tax Map 126-A-38, Parcel A.[1] The property sits at the intersection of Wilbourne Road (Route 701) and Morgan Farm Road (Route 702) east of Clarksville. The log cabin sits approximately 250 feet from Wilbourne Road behind a canopy of young and middle-aged cypress, cedar, green ash, oak, and pine trees. In front of the cabin is the shadow of a circular driveway dominated by a towering Spanish oak. The three contributing out-buildings (all dating ca. 1930) are a wood storage shed, a chicken house, and an outhouse, all located behind the cabin.

Detailed Description - Exterior

The cabin is a one-and-one-half-story log building with a one-room-with-loft configuration under a side-gable roof. The cabin's overall appearance, including its form, size, plan, materials, and method of construction, suggests a date of construction ca. 1865, but it may have an antebellum construction date. The cabin sits on a low, random-rubble fieldstone foundation, portions of which have subsided, especially on the south side. The cabin's sills sit directly on the top of the foundation. The walls enclosing the first floor are constructed of V-notched logs, while both of the gables are clad with weatherboard (historically the logs were also covered with weatherboard, but the weatherboard was removed in the mid-twentieth century). The chinking between the logs is mostly intact and in fair to good condition, with evidence of some past repair. At the west end stands a stone and brick chimney in good condition.

The site is located on Wilbourne Road (Route 701) and is accessed from the road by the trace of a dirt driveway cut through the woods which is comprised of a mix of mostly younger to middle-aged growth of evergreen and deciduous trees. The cabin is in an open area with brushy undergrowth and several young trees. Behind the cabin and to the northwest stand three dependencies: a storage building, a poultry house, and an outhouse. All are of frame construction and appear to date from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century.

The two-bay south façade of the Sydnor Cabin faces towards Wilbourne Road and appears as the primary façade. It contains an entrance on the right and a window opening on the left. The entrance is fitted with a simple plank door. The window has remnants of a double-hung sash unit with six-over-six configuration. The rear, or north façade, has a central entrance with a six-panel door, and no fenestration. Across both façades, the logs just above the door openings are marked with pockets across the top sides where the ends of the floor joists supporting the loft floor are set. The east end contains a six-over-six, double-hung sash wood window centrally placed on the first floor, and a four-over-four wood sash window directly overhead in the gable. The exterior end chimney standing against the west wall is built of stone, composed of cut blocks and fieldstone (with some mortar repairs probably early to mid-twentieth-century in date), with a brick chimney stack laid in American bond. The stack rises from stone shoulders that begin where the log portion of the wall meets the clapboard section at the base of the gable. The workmanship in shaping and fitting the stones shows considerable skill in masonry construction in comparison to similar log house

chimneys from the same period in Mecklenburg County.

Throughout the building, the log construction exhibits skilled workmanship; especially in the creation of the V-notches and log joinery; the joints are consistently tight and remain close fitting. The appearance of the walls is consistent with the method of log building construction that involves cutting logs roughly to size while still round, then notching and assembling them, then cutting the ends at the corners to make them flush, and adzing the exposed sides of the logs to flatten them. Adze marks are visible on the exposed surfaces of the logs, and between the logs the round profile of the sides that were not cut flat can be seen; in many areas the bark remains in place. The window and door openings are surrounded with simple wooden frames of flat boards without molded profiles, which appear to be mid-twentieth-century in date and may have been added when the weatherboard covering the logs was removed from the first floor.

Interior Description

The interior of the cabin is comprised of one room with a loft above. Within the first-floor room, there is a fireplace at the west end and a stair at the east end to the loft. The fireplace consists of a simple, solid brick mantel twenty courses in height, with a small brick firebox. There is a row of header bricks capping the mantel, and a second row of headers six courses below the top row. This mantel was probably built in the early to mid-twentieth century to replace an earlier one. At the opposite end of the room, the stair rises from the southeast corner, immediately adjacent to the primary entrance in the south façade. It is a dogleg stair with two steps rising to a shallow landing, then continuing along the east wall to the loft above. There is no railing present. While the materials in the stair suggest repair and possibly reconstruction in the early to mid-twentieth century, the stair has not been greatly modified, as its location, size, and configuration are consistent with the age and architectural characteristics of the cabin.

The interior walls of the cabin's first floor are clad with sheetrock that was decorated around 1960 with dark, brushed-stamped designs in various shapes against a light background—a reflection of the era of decorating with dry brush strokes. The flooring consists of narrow wood planks and replaces an earlier floor that would also have been of wood; it appears to date from the early to mid-twentieth century. In the loft, the walls are unfinished. The knee walls are exposed log, and the space is open to the roof with rafters exposed; on each side of the loft, the rafters rest on the top log which serves as the plate. Broad planks sit atop the rafters and carry the metal roofing. Faint reciprocal or pit-sawn marks are apparent on some of the rafters and planks. In the gable ends, the studs and interior sides of the weatherboard cladding are exposed. The window frames in the interior show construction with what appear to be wire nails dating from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, and appear as simple, flat surrounds without molded profiles and with perpendicular joints as on the dwelling's exterior.

Secondary Resources

Behind the cabin stands the storage building which is one story in height with a side-gabled roof, and is located about twenty feet northwest of the cabin. Further away from the cabin and to the north/northwest stand the poultry house, also one story tall, and the outhouse (these two buildings are in deteriorated condition). All three outbuildings are contributing resources; all date to ca. 1930.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor Log Cabin is associated with Reconstruction in Mecklenburg County, VA, 1865-1890 [2]; and has significance as a "home place" for several generations of African-Americans from Reconstruction onward, as a symbol of the post-slavery economic advances of African American families in the twentieth century. The property was sold out of the holdings of the Skipwith family of nearby Prestwould Plantation in 1884 and was purchased in 1888 by Lovice (Vicey) Skipwith, a former slave at Prestwould, and became home to several African American families in Mecklenburg County's Bluestone District near the town of Skipwith. The cabin possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. It is a tangible representative of the history of African American families in Mecklenburg County, like others throughout Virginia who, when freed, established themselves as tenant farmers on the plantations where they were formerly enslaved or as small farmers on plots of land adjacent to the former plantations. The log cabin is still owned by descendants of Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor (ca. 1854-1950), a carver of tombstones in the area of Cabin Point, with whom the cabin is historically associated.

Justification of Criteria

The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin meets National Register Criterion A under Social History and Ethnic History (African American) for its association with the immediate aftermath of slavery during Reconstruction, when the property was purchased in 1888 by Vicey Skipwith, the first African American woman and former slave to purchase the property. The cabin, and its property purchase of 6 1/5 acres, is representative of economic progress achieved in home ownership by African Americans in the post-bellum era and onwards. The cabin is also eligible under Criterion C for its architecture. As a vernacular log cabin constructed 1865 or earlier, it is representative of the simple, yet carefully constructed, dwellings once inhabited by--also built by-- enslaved African Virginians prior to 1865 and by freed African Virginians in the Reconstruction period and beyond. The property is closely associated with the life of Robert Parker "Parker" Sydnor, a tombstone carver who lived in the cabin in the 1930s and 1940s and is eligible under Criterion B as the property most directly associated with Parker Sydnor's productive life.

Acknowledgments

Research preparation of this magnitude has involved many contributors. Among them are Mr. David Arnold, president of Historic Boydton's Renaissance; Dr. Julian Hudson, director of Prestwould Foundation; Elder Leroy Atkins of the Church of the Latter Day Saints' Arizona Regional Family History Center; staff of the Virginia Historical Society; and Arizona State University Interlibrary loan department. Many local informants from Mecklenburg and Halifax Counties, Virginia assisted with obtaining information through interviews and "memory-telling" for the preparation of this nomination and their assistance has been much appreciated: Mrs. Annie Allen, Mrs. Bernice Cook, Mrs. Marie Cook, Mrs. Fannie Coleman, Mrs. Margaret Harris, Mrs. Doris Hester, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Smith, Mrs. Lucia Nunez Young, and members of St. Matthew Baptist Church. The following family members provided valuable information and support from oral history interviews, and genealogical archival research in support of the nomination: Mr. Glenn E. Reyes, Mrs. Bernice Reyes Akinbileje, Ms. Alexandria J. Reyes (digital photography of the Cabin), Mr. Raimundo M. Reyes, Mr. Thurston G. Reyes; and Mr. James Terry whom we thank tremendously for his assistance with and sincere interest in the cabin site.

Criterion A

The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history, including the immediate aftermath of slavery in Reconstruction (1865-1890) in Mecklenburg County when the property was purchased by a former slave, and in the early decades of the twentieth century (ca. 1900-1930) when the cabin represented a "home place" for families related to or associated with Vicey Skipwith, Patrick Robert Sydnor and others and represented advances in the post-slavery economic progress made by African Americans as landowners.

Background – Slavery at Prestwould Plantation 1798-1865

Restored and well-maintained plantation "big houses" once owned and inhabited by antebellum plantation owners and associated with "first" family names such as Washington, Carter, Jefferson and Monroe, are visible across the Virginia landscape and are much acclaimed. In Southside Virginia's Mecklenburg County, Prestwould, the restored antebellum plantation of Sir Peyton Skipwith (1740 – 1805) and Lady Jean Skipwith (1748-1826) is well known and both its historical and architectural significance has been firmly established in a National Historic Landmark nomination completed in 2002-2003. A historic map of Prestwould plantation documents that the property on which the Parker Sydnor log cabin stands, about a mile from the manor house at Prestwould, was once a part of the original Prestwould estate. Prestwould's legacy began in 1798 with the completion of the Prestwould manor and the expansion of Sir Peyton Skipwith's land holdings demonstrated his power and wealth in Mecklenburg County. The log cabin sits at the intersection or "fork in the road" of that area of Skipwith's plantation – at what is now the intersection of routes 701 and 702. The 1798 to-scale plat map by Skipwith's surveyor John Hill uses the name "Cabin Point" to designate that fork. The same name is also cited on an 1864 Civil War "Gilmer" map of Mecklenburg County showing the intersection.[3] This is the location of the Sydnor Log Cabin.[4] See section of map on continuation sheet 29.

Sir Peyton Skipwith willed the Prestwould estate to his oldest son, Humberston Skipwith (1791-1863). After the death of Humberston, Fulwar Skipwith (1836-1900), inherited Prestwould's "lands on the north side of the Staunton River…."[5] Fulwar Skipwith was Humberston's son (from his second marriage to Lelia Skipwith Robertson), and inherited Prestwould in 1863.[6] During the period of Reconstruction Fulwar Skipwith descended into financial ruin and although his siblings and particularly his eldest son, Austin Skipwith, helped him to retain Prestwould, he had to sell most of the land and exquisite hand-crafted furniture that had been a part of the original estate.[7]

It was at that economic and historical juncture of Fulwar Skipwith's financial insolvency towards the end of Reconstruction that many African American families in the Bluestone District of Mecklenburg County in general, and at Cabin Point on Cox Road (present-day Wilbourne Road/Route 701) in particular, began to acquire land. To divest the estate of his debts Fulwar Skipwith sold off tracts and small parcels of Prestwould land to both black and white individuals, both male and female. Newly established African American churches bought property from Skipwith in order to establish their church communities. For example, as recorded on June 25, 1877, Fulwar Skipwith and David Ligon sold one-half acre in the vicinity of Cabin Point for $5.50 to a group of African American trustees for them to establish St. Matthew Baptist Church "for the colored people and their descendants."[8] In 1977 St. Matthew celebrated its 100th anniversary. At the conjunction of Reconstruction and the consciousness of "doing something for

ourselves," African Americans who had only recently been chattel property on the Skipwith lands, could now envision the real possibility of becoming property owners of the land on which they had once labored as enslaved African American Virginians.

In 1884, Fulwar Skipwith sold a parcel of forty acres to a white Mecklenburg County farmer, J. J. Crowder and his wife. A part of that parcel is the property containing the Sydnor log cabin on Cox Road. Intriguingly enough, however, the first legal record relating to the succession of the cabin property of 6 1/5 acres to an African American is listed on "the first day of June eighteen hundred and eighty eight" deeding the acreage from J. J. Crowder to Lovice "Vicey" Skipwith – a former slave woman from Prestwould.[9] In 1870 Vicey Skipwith (b. 1856) was a tenant along with six members of her family living at Prestwould in the former slave cabins (U. S. 1870 Census). Research indicates that after slavery was abolished, African Americans continued to labor at Prestwould as tenant farmers or sharecroppers (Samford 4). Legal documents as well as cultural provenance indicate that the Parker Sydnor property, part of the Prestwould estate since 1798, was purchased only twenty-five years after the Civil War by a former slave from the plantation.

The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin, as an extant former slave dwelling in the rural South, as a direct artifact from ethnohistorical patterns of American slavery and as an architectural vestige of the antebellum South sits on property that was once a part of the Prestwould estate of Sir Peyton Skipwith and Lady Jean Skipwith outside of the town of Clarksville, in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

In his seminal contribution to vernacular architecture and the scholarship of material culture, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, John Michael Vlach maintains that, "Beyond the white masters' residence, back of and beyond the Big House, was a world of work dominated by black people. The inhabitants of this world knew it intimately, and they gave to it, by thought and deed, their own definition of place. Slave owners set up the contexts of servitude, but they did not control those contexts absolutely…..Taking advantage of numerous opportunities to assert counterclaims over the spaces and buildings to which they were confined, slaves found that they could blunt some of the harsh edges of slavery's brutality" (Vlach 1). In this sense, slave dwellings such as the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin became connected to space and a unique sense of place that was carefully carved out by the enslaved African Virginians themselves.

From a confirming perspective, Carter L. Hudgins and Edward Chappell state in the National Historic Landmark nomination for Prestwould (2002/2003) that, "While an impressive number of large 18th-century plantation houses survive in Virginia, and while they are also among the most architecturally impressive houses built in the American colonies prior to the Revolution, as a group they are almost entirely bereft of the once numerous service buildings that housed and supported myriad household activities and the enslaved African men and women who performed them."[10] The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin signifies the other side of that historical narrative and therefore complements Prestwould's own significance in the history of slavery in America. The Sydnor Log Cabin is a representative example of the historic, economic, and cultural contributions of African American families in American history.

Thus, while Prestwould represents the landed gentry of the Early Republic and its subsequent legacies, the Parker Sydnor log cabin represents a community of African Americans who were once enslaved by those gentry. While

Prestwould is a particular space in Mecklenburg County, the Sydnor Log Cabin is an architectural symbol of the kind of "home place" that reconfigured itself (no longer the outlying "quarters" of Prestwould) after Emancipation at Cabin Point and proceeded along Cox Road (present day Wilbourne Road/Route 701) toward the towns of Skipwith and Chase City. In *The Claims of Kinfolk*, historian Dylan C. Penningroth uses the term "home place" as a paradigm for contextualizing property ownership and the identification of place and space. "Home place," however, is a vernacular term that is used by African Americans throughout the south and especially in Virginia to designate affinity to the land and its memories of kinship and fictive kin. "Home place" is not only a place of house or property, but it can also be viewed as ancestral space. An example of the meaning of "home place" is seen in the following conversation that took place with an octogenarian African American woman who lives in Danville, Virginia:

Interviewer: Have you lived in Danville all your life?
Mrs. Harris: No, I traveled the world….
Interviewer: The world?! Where did you live?
Mrs. Harris: [after some hesitation] Well, I lived in New York….Pennsylvania….New Jersey…. And Ohio….
Interviewer: And then you came back to Danville?
Mrs. Harris: Oh no, I then went back to the home place.
Interviewer: The home place? Where is that?
Mrs. Harris: Skipwith [Virginia]….the home place. That's where my people are from. Not here in Danville![11]

That sense of place arising out of the past is what Nobel laureate Toni Morrison refers to as the "site of memory."[12] Like the slaveholding Anglo American "first families" of Mecklenburg County, these African American "first families" also intermarried and relationships connected to a property ownership came into being in the context of a place that always shared "sites of memory." They are a people who had known each other and their connections during slavery continued during Reconstruction as they struggled for the rights of citizenship—as opposed to the privilege of citizenship—through the integrity of work (not slave labor or sharecropping), legal marriages and property ownership.

In her study, *Life by the Roaring Roanoke: A History of Mecklenburg County*, Susan L. Bracey states that enslaved African Virginians "had been in Mecklenburg County since the territory was a part of the desolate frontier of Brunswick County" (233). Mecklenburg County was formed out of Lunenburg County. On March 1, 1765, "the county [Mecklenburg] came into legal existence…with the meeting of the first court [and] its government" (Bracey 57). Historian Michael Nicholls maintains that, "While the Southside [of Virginia] did not have as high a proportion of slave owners and slaves at the Tidewater during the first half of the [eighteenth] century, it soon came to rely heavily on slave labor (55)."

1798 John Hill Plat of Prestwould and the to-scale location of Cabin Point –"The Quarters"

John Hill inscribed his signature on the plat with the following: "On the first day of February began and on the 15th completed a Survey of the tract of Sir Peyton Skipwith's Land AD 1798. Laid down by a scale of 80 poles to an inch. By John Hill (seal)

By 1798 the Skipwith property at Prestwould extended to the outskirts of the immediacy of the big house to the Cox Road site of Cabin Point. The 1798 to-scale plat drawn by Skipwith's surveyor and sometime overseer, John Hill, designated the "fork" in Cox Road—what is now the intersection of Wilbourne Road and Morgan Farm Road (Routes 701/702)— as Cabin Point. This is the location of the Sydnor log cabin. The John Hill plat of Prestwould is the single document that gives a visual image to the plantation landscape of Prestwould in the 18th century and the layout of the "quarters." In this instance and throughout historical and cartographical references herein, the designated "quarter" refers to the groups of dwellings set aside for enslaved African Virginians. Vlach defines the significance of the term: "At the beginning of the eighteenth century, as vast rural estates comprising thousands of acres were being acquired by members of the Virginia gentry, the practice arose of subdividing plantation land holdings into more manageable portions called 'quarters'….By the end of the middle of the eighteenth century, sets of slave cabins—located out of a planter's sight, though never very far from his or her thoughts—had become definitive features of southern plantations….The dwellings used as field quarters frequently were only one-room structures" (153, 155). Vlach quotes an eighteenth-century traveler confirming the quarter as "a number of Huts or Hovels, built some distance from the Mansion-House…" (155). Frederick Law Olmsted described his sightings of quarters as "rude-looking little log cabins….of various degrees of comfort and commodiousness" (quoted in Vlach 155). A planter's daughter, Letitia Burwell, writes that, "Confined exclusively to a Virginia plantation during my earliest childhood, I believed the world one vast plantation bounded by negro quarters" (quoted in Vlach 153). The February 1, 1798 extant plat of Prestwould distinctly specifies the locations of slave quarters in addition to barns, mills, a ferry, outbuildings, a distillery and, of course, the manor itself. By 1798 the building of Prestwould was complete. Similar to other plantations of the era there were quarters throughout the land holdings, both near the big house and in the outlying areas.

The original hand-drawn plat now housed at the Prestwould Foundation (Clarksville, VA) is drawn to scale with 80 poles to an inch, with 1 Pole = 16.5 feet.[13] Cabin Point is 2 inches or 2640 feet (less than one-half mile) from Skipwith's main gate. Even in today's standards, this is walking distance between the two locations.[14] Distances to the various quarters can be measured with some accuracy and indicate some of the quarters as being two miles from the central location of Prestwould. The John Hill Plat shows the following quarters in relation to the "big house" itself: The New Quarters NW, the Juba Quarters SE, the Bluestone Quarters NW, the Horse Shoe Quarters NW, and the Upper Quarters located on Skipwith's Island. In addition to the John Hill plat that clearly marks slave dwellings, according to Patricia Samford, "distant or far quarters…were placed near the outlying fields and housed agricultural workers….Skipwith's inventory also listed five quarters that were in existence in 1805: the Home Plantation, Brass's Quarter, Allen's Creek, the Forrest, and Issac's Quarter" (4). From this perspective the cabin property can be seen as an "outlying quarter" of the original Prestwould estate that had farm land extending in this northerly direction from the Dan and Staunton Rivers. Skipwith also had a ferry business along the river. At that time in Mecklenburg history, an island was located within the convergence of the Staunton and Dan Rivers. The island, now submerged under water from the damming of the Roanoke River, was farm land and occupied slave quarters. The area is now officially designated as a "lake" (Kerr Lake or Buggs Island Lake) but the locals still refer to the body of water as "the river."

Prestwould Foundation staff, researchers at Colonial Williamsburg, and various scholars have documented that there is at least one surviving slave cabin at Prestwould. "This slave building was built in two stages….Each of the rooms housed, as suggested by….studies of plantation records, a separate family."[15] Slave quarters in the immediate vicinity

of big houses were often of better building material on southern plantations. Therefore, the Prestwould slave houses that were part of the "home quarter" (dwellings for the African Virginians who labored as house servants) down the hill from the big house and behind low stone walls were in keeping with typical plantation design—these cabins were not quite out of view but veiled by plantation buildings and activities. There was a shared organizational premise among the planters—from Jefferson's Monticello to Carter's Sabine Hall—"to separate visually as well as physically slave houses from the planters view" (Hudgins and Chappell 20). On the John Hill plat the home quarters are indicated in proximity to Prestwould. "The outbuildings located near the main house were frequently designed, painted, or otherwise decorated in a manner that complimented the main house; they were seen as immediate extensions of the master's space" (Vlach 233). The slave houses in the quarters near the main house as well as the cabin dwellings in the outlying quarters of Prestwould were in keeping with the log constructions and of the plantation era. Indeed, Prestwould "with its rare surviving slave quarter and its other slave-related buildings, contains a full range of plantation buildings (Hudgins and Chappell 17) – and yet another surviving log cabin at Cabin Point.

Whereas Prestwould has represented power, pride, and wealth grounded in the early formations of the American dream of success enabled by slavery, such a dwelling as the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin has come to represent endurance, survival, thriving and pride in perseverance, despite the institution of slavery. Whereas history can well document the economic and cultural wealth of the inhabitants of Prestwould, we have only documented glimpses into the history and culture of the inhabitants of the "quarters" of Prestwould and of the postbellum African American families who came to call Cabin Point and its environs home. Prestwould touches history in one way. The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin touches history in another. These two histories intersect at meanings of family, architectural significance, property, community place, and on the landscape of Mecklenburg County in the context of significant historical events. "Plantations, albeit unintentionally, served as the primary sites at which a distinctive black American culture matures" (Vlach 12). Slave-era dwellings such as the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin became connected to a unique sense of place that was carefully carved out by the enslaved African Virginians themselves.

Cabin Point, at the intersection, is situated northeast of the main road (the "plantation avenue") leading into Prestwould. In 1820 the third Episcopal church was "located on the left side of the road leading from Cabin Point to Clarksville, about midway between Cabin Point and Skipwith's big gate" (Bracey 114). While the road leading to Cabin Point is unnamed on the John Hill plat, Susan L. Bracey cites this area as the beginning of Cox Road as it leads to the present day village of Skipwith. Cox Road would also be known as the Clarksville Road to Christianville (the old name for Chase City). Quoting Bracey at length further clarifies the significance of Sir Peyton Skipwith's legacy in particular sections of the local community: "Land for the Richmond and Mecklenburg depot at Five Forks had been given by Mrs. Lucy Bowers who required, as part of the agreement, that the new depot be called 'Skipwith.' The *new name was an acknowledgment that the area had once been part of Skipwith's 'Prestwould' estates.* It was soon a thriving railroad town…. "(italics for emphasis, 136). The Skipwith holdings extended beyond Cabin Point, north along Cox Road and then toward the present-day village of Skipwith. The John Hill plat of Prestwould corroborates with extant eighteenth century deeds, the direction of the Prestwould acreage and boundaries at this historical point in time. This northerly direction of land acquisition is further confirmed when Fulwar Skipwith divested of properties along Cox Road (and elsewhere) during the 1880s and 1890s. More significantly for the purposes of this nomination, the 1798 plat situates Cabin Point and Cox Road in the immediate environment of eighteenth-century Skipwith landholdings; these eighteenth century place names that gave rise to the significance of "home place" for African Americans in the Bluestone District of Mecklenburg County during Reconstruction and beyond.

Consequently, the John Hill plat is a central extant document that establishes locations of the early "quarters" for enslaved African Virginians. Many of the locations of the former quarters would become distinct African American neighborhoods in the Bluestone District after the Civil War.

1864 Gilmer Civil War Map of Mecklenburg County and its location of Cabin Point

Cabin Point is marked on the 1864 Gilmer Civil War map of Mecklenburg County. The 1864 Gilmer Map was produced by the Engineer Bureau of the Confederate States War Department and named for Jeremy Francis Gilmer, chief of the Engineer Bureau.[16] In addition to the supervision of wartime construction projects, including bridge construction and harbor fortifications, Gilmer oversaw the production of maps for use by the Confederate military. These maps were produced for the Confederate army in response to an urgent need for knowledge of the rural southern topography and landscape, especially that of Virginia and North Carolina, for military fortifications and surveillance. Hence, the maps were fairly accurate and mostly drawn to a scale of 1:80,000.

As a county map, the 1864 Mecklenburg map clearly and rather extensively details boundaries, settlements, towns, rivers, creeks, railroads, passes, woodland, mills, fords, ferries, bridges, cabins, names or residents and slave quarters. Skipwith's plantation, mills, creeks, rivers, churches, named and unnamed roads appear on the map. Named farms such as "Boyd," "Skipwith," "Burwell," "Lewis," "Sydnor," "Crowder," and "Crenshaw" are cited. We know these are the dwellings and properties of Anglo-American farmers and larger plantations because they are named. Moreover, lower class white farmers also lived in one-room log structures at this time and their farms did not have the status of "plantation" because of acreage or because they had fewer than twenty slaves; but they were landowning citizens and as a result, the Gilmore map named their farms—their cabins were not deemed as clusters of "quarters" (Samford 8). The labels, "qrs" and "cabins" that are notated on the map refer to the dwellings of enslaved African Virginians, as previously indicated. John Michael Vlach and other scholars confirm that most slave holdings were not large, impressive plantations resembling Tara, for example, in "Gone with the Wind." Vlach explains that, "Large plantations dotted the southern countryside fairly evenly from Maryland to Texas, signaling to all passersby the financial and social rewards of the plantation system. However, well into the nineteenth century, those benefits were still only realized by a few families. Historians have usually granted planter status to those men and women who owned at least twenty slaves" (Vlach 7).[17] Therefore, many of the farms listed on the 1864 Gilmer map were not plantations such as Prestwould, but middle yeoman farms and the staked out holdings of white citizens. Regardless of the size of the farm or plantation, the owners' names are listed on the map as opposed to the listing of nameless "cabins" and "quarters" that clearly refer to clusters of slave dwellings. "At Prestwould there were, as there were at larger plantations throughout Virginia, quarters dispersed over the Skipwith lands that put slaves close to the fields in which they toiled" (Hudgins and Chappell 12). On the 1864 map the Skipwith estate continued to show extensive landholdings and "quarters" for African Virginians on the north and south side of the Staunton River; and in the middle of the Staunton River on "Skipwith's Island," the "Upper Quarters" cited on the 1798 John Hill Plat.

Reconstruction: Property to Proprietorship on Route 701/Cox Road

With the abolition of slavery African Americans in Virginia and in Mecklenburg County with the surnames of their former slave owners, such as Skipwith, Cook, Goode, Fuller, Sydnor, Coleman, Hardy, and Burwell, began to either rent small cabins or buy land and build small houses near the plantations where they were formerly enslaved, thereby

establishing a shared community of kindred spirits that had an immediate memory of slavery. These families were the immediate ascendants of slavery. Thus such families were, decidedly, "first African American Virginians"[18] because they had been enslaved on the nearby farms and plantations. In this heroic sense of space and place the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin is associated with African American heritage in Virginia history.

The recently emancipated people attempted piecing together stable and even comfortable lives for their families.[19] A central key to their material and emotional success was real estate ownership that inevitably had the resonance of Thomas Jefferson's "pursuit of happiness." Vicey Skipwith's purchase of land formerly belonging to the owners of Prestwould is an example. Census data shows Vicey Skipwith in Mecklenburg County in 1870 and 1880, in Pittsylvania County in 1910, and in Brooklyn, NY in 1930. Vicey Skipwith was a cook for private families. Even though she conducted property transactions, she was not able to read or write according to census data. She rented the Cabin (or offered lodging) to a number of African American families who lived along Cox Road through five generations starting with the era of Reconstruction.

She was listed as Vicey Anthony in the 1930 U. S. Census and she lived in the same building in Brooklyn, New York with Christina Sydnor—the African American who as a feme sole, in 1891 had purchased fifteen acres in Boydton, Virginia, the present county seat of Mecklenburg. They were, "countrywomen" in the sense of having shared a common "home place" in Mecklenburg. The exact date of Vicey Skipwith's death is not known. Remarkably, the log cabin property remained in her name until 1959 with various collateral relatives and fictive kin occupying the cabin on Cox Road. It appears that the Cabin became an urgent refuge for those who needed a place to live, until the next stage of their journey could afford them better shelter. Because of this consistent occupation, the Cabin was maintained and repaired, and eventually wired with electricity in the late 1950s.

During the period of the late 1930s Parker Sydnor resided in the log cabin as did his daughter, Cora Irene (Burwell) Sydnor Shields in the mid-1970s until the cabin was condemned for habitation by the Southside Virginia Department of Health. While the living memory of Vicey Skipwith is not as vivid among the African American inhabitants of the old "home place" along Cox Road, the memory of Parker Sydnor lives along the site of memory. He is the living memory connected to the property first African American-owned by Vicey Skipwith.

The youngest daughter of Parker Sydnor and Betsy Burwell Sydnor, Bethenia Sydnor Rogers (&Walter Rogers, husband) was deeded the property from the Vicey Skipwith estate in 1959:

"This deed made this 20th day of April, 1959, between Bethenia Rogers and Walter Rogers, her husband, parties of the first part, and Cora Shields, party of the second part. WITNESSETH: ….the said parties of the first part do hereby grant and convey unto the said Cora Shields the following property: All that certain tract or parcel of land located in Bluestone District of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, containing SIX AND ONE-FIFTH (6 1/5) ACRES, more or less, *known and surveyed as Lot No 3 and being part of the Fulwar Skipwith tract.* (italics added for emphasis. Deed Book 167 p. 56). This is the identical tract of land in all respects which was conveyed to the Vicey Skipwith by J. J. Crowder and his wife by their deed dated June 25, 1888."

Like many log cabins built in the postbellum or antebellum periods, the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin has been "hidden in plain view" on the Southside Virginia landscape and its presence and ethnographic context are far less known.

Additionally, the particular log cabin site is exceptionally significant because it is historically and was economically connected to the Prestwould estate as well as to the succession of enslaved African Virginian families who labored on the plantation during slavery; they lived on the estate as tenants and wage laborers (share croppers) during Reconstruction and throughout the 1920s and 1930s when the estate was still being farmed.[20] Again in the context of history telling, Mrs. Margaret Harris, a local informant, supplies valuable information about local African Americans who continued to have a relationship with Prestwould well into the early twentieth century:

Interviewer: By the way, did Johnny Skipwith [deceased uncle of Mrs. Harris] come from Skipwith, Virginia?
Mrs. Harris: Oh, no, he was from Prestwould.
Interviewer: He was from Prestwould?
Mrs. Harris: He was from there.
Interviewer: Did Johnny Skipwith ever work at Prestwould?
Mrs. Harris: Oh, all of us worked at the Prestwould farm in those days….I was about 8 or 9 years old…me and my sisters. I tended the sheep. I visited there since then…last year with my niece….such a beautiful house inside…beautiful…a real pretty house…oh my….[21]

Patricia M. Samford aptly demonstrated in her research of Prestwould the extent to which African Americans continued to live at Prestwould in the early twentieth century in the former "quarters" as tenant farmers and sharecroppers just as Mrs. Harris said. Mrs. Harris was a young girl at the time of early twentieth century sharecropping at Prestwould; her parents were younger contemporaries of Parker Sydnor. Mrs. Harris says that Johnny Skipwith was from Prestwould. If Johnny Skipwith were living now, he would be a nonagenarian; his parents were born towards the end of Reconstruction and quite conceivably were living as tenants at Prestwould in the early 20th century where Johnny Skipwith may have been born. Therefore, Mrs. Harris may well have been stating—in vernacular terms—that Johnny Skipwith was born at the Prestwould farm—and therefore, indeed, "he was from Prestwould." In this significant interlude of information regarding Prestwould and its relationship to the contemporaries of Parker Sydnor, Mrs. Harris is history-telling through personal and yet very historical sites of memory.

Mrs. Harris's seemingly inconsequential information about her relationship with Prestwould (and that of others within the site of memory) is, in fact, a very important piece of living history that helps to confirm how a particular historical account of labor and family relationships experienced by a particular ethnic community and its continuity within integral relationships, lend credibility and evidence to the broader dimensions of economic and social history in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

Considering the nature of plantation ideology and the agricultural economy on which the South based its antebellum wealth, it is not at all surprising that the first notion of reparations for slavery came in the form of land. During the final months of the Civil War, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman marched victoriously through Georgia to the sea, nearly unopposed by Confederate forces. Thousands of freed slaves (called freedmen) accompanied Sherman's forces. General Sherman, with the approval of the War Department, issued Special Field Order No. 15 on January 16, 1865. The order stated that "the islands of Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering St. Johns River, Florida are reserved and set apart for the settlement of Negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States."

Furthermore, Sherman's order specified freedmen would be offered assistance "to enable them to establish a peaceable agricultural settlement.[22]

Land allocations, however, to newly freed men lasted for less than a year because in 1866 President Johnson ordered all land titles rescinded. The freedmen were forced off the land, and it was returned to the former white plantation owners. Under the Southern Homestead Act of 1862, freedmen could purchase land at low prices, but few had any money after many years of performing unpaid labor to make such purchases so soon after Emancipation. Regardless, the phrase "forty acres and a mule" continued to echo in American history and be associated with property ownership, citizenship and the American ethic of hard work.

Property ownership motivated many early freed men and women throughout the South well beyond the decades of Reconstruction. In *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction,* Eric Foner quotes a Baptist minister, a former slave, who addressed the meaning of Emancipation when at a convention in 1865 he defined it as "placing us where we could reap the fruit of our own labor, and take care of ourselves…. to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor (5). While fortunate African Americans acquired parcels of land, according to Foner, "many northerners … believed that the transition from slave to free labor meant not giving blacks land but enabling them to work for wages in more humane conditions than under slavery….while some black families acquired land at auctions organized by the Treasury Department or private owners during the war, and others simply became squatters on abandoned plantations, most land went to northern investors bent upon demonstrating the superiority of free wage labor…." (60).

In this instance Paul Heinegg's work (*Free African Americans of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina from the Colonial Period to About 1820*) is significant because he maintains that free people of color had strong connections with kinsmen and neighbors (white and black) who could provide access to property by loaning money, securing bonds, or simply testifying to good character **(**www.freeafricanamericans.com**).** Decidedly, former slaves wanted to have land for their own use in order to "work" the land for themselves—they had "sufficient intelligence" (quoted in Foner, 6) to know that land acquisition would foster education and better living conditions, a transition Vicey Skipwith initiated in 1888 with her purchase of 6 1/5 acres of Skipwith property at Cabin Point.

Therefore, after Emancipation, Cabin Point and Cox Road begin to emerge as a distinct, renewed, although impoverished black community. Cabin Point had been another "quarter" and part of the old community of slavery. With Reconstruction, the reality of proprietorship created a new declaration and envisioning of the "home place" that would, indeed, help to introduce African Americans to the meaning of citizenship in its myriad dimensions of community renewal, and cultural significance of property. Langston Hughes' well known poem, "I Too, Sing America" captures this import of ethnohistoric significance, valor and renewal: "I, too, sing America/I am the darker brother…/Tomorrow…/I'll be at the table when company comes/…I, too, am America" (Hughes http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/ prmMID/15615). As newly freed African Americans—now proclaimed American citizens—they attempted to write their own histories and "sing America" in creating agency through the buying and selling of land within the arch of the actual estate on which they had been enslaved—they would come to the table in order to claim their America. Undoubtedly, property ownership during Reconstruction allowed former slaves to carve out a measure of economic and cultural autonomy and to create a cultural community of names "first" families located along Cox Road. They were not recipients of the initial free land promised even though the ideology

of "forty acres and a mule" continued to resound and remained a metonym within Reconstruction.

Vicey Skipwith, Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor and Fictive Kin

In light of such a paradigm of land acquisition for many former enslaved African Virginians during Reconstruction, how did Vicey Skipwith arrive at having a parcel of Fulwar Skipwith's land? By 1888, Fulwar Skipwith was in no financial condition to give land to anyone. In 1884 a white Mecklenburg County farmer, "J. J. Crowder & wife," purchased a parcel of forty acres from Fulwar Skipwith:

This deed made this 1st day of May 1884, between Fulwar Skipwith and Annie L. his wife of the first part and J. J. Crowder of the second part all of Mecklenburg County Virginia, witnesseth that in consideration of two hundred and forty dollars to them in hand of said by said J. J. Crowder , the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, the said Fulwar Skipwith and wife hereby grant unto the said J. J. Crowder, with general warranty, the following real estate to wit: Forty acres of land on the Clarksville and Chase City and Clarksville and Oakley Road in said County bounded as follows to wit: beginning at the fork of the Clarksville and Chase City and Clarksville and Oakley roads, thence along the Chase City road. N 45 ¼ & 4.27 chs. N. 64 E. 20.18 chs. N. 62 ¼ & 5.85 chs. to corner stake with F. T. Goodell thence along Goodell's line N. 48 ¾ W. 13.79 chs to corner stake in G. W. Hardy's line, thence along Hardy's line S. 41 ½ W. 9 24 chs. To old corner Hickory, thence N. 37. W. 10.52 chs to corner stake with Richard Skipwith, thence along Richard Skipwith's line S. 41 ½ W 16.90 .24 chs. to Oakley road, thence along said road, its various courses. S. 48 ½ E. 5.42 chs. S 39. E. 3.60 chs. S. 16 ¼ E. 6.24 chs. to beginning. Witnesseth the following signatures….[23]

The surname of Crowder in Mecklenburg County can be identified as early as 1818 (Bracey 120) and in 1864 (Gilmer Civil War Map of Mecklenburg County). John J. Crowder and wife, Margaret R. Crowder as residents of Bluestone District are listed in the 1880 U. S. Census: Age: 42; estimated birth 1838; Occupation: farmer; Household members; Margaret R. Crowder 31, Charles B. Crowder 7, John J. Crowder 5, and Alfie Crowder.[24] This particular J. J. Crowder, a farmer, was originally from Dinwiddie County, Virginia and he had begun to buy land before the Civil War in Mecklenburg County.[25] Thus J. J. Crowder established new boundaries of land previously owned by the descendants of Sir Peyton Skipwith. The first legal record relating the cabin property of 6 1/5 acres to an African American is recorded on "the first day of June eighteen hundred and eighty-eight," between J. J. Crowder & Margaret R. Crowder his wife of the county of Mecklenburg of the first part & Vicey Skipwith of the 2nd part, witnesseth that in consideration of the sum of sixty two dollars the said J. J. Crowder & Margaret R. Crowder his wife do grant unto the said Vicey Skipwith with General Warranty all their right title & interest in Six & one fifth acres of land in Mecklenburg County, known & surveyed on plat as lot no 3-and being a part of the Fulwar Skipwith tract. The said J. J. Crowder & Margaret R. Crowder his wife covenant that they have the right to convey the said land to the Grantee that they have done no act to encumber the said land that the Grantee shall have quiet possession of the said land, free from all encumbrances…. This land is to be taken from the 40 acre tract. (J. J. Crowder Deed Book 50, pp 68-69)

With the purchase of a humble 6 1/5 acres of land, Vicey Skipwith, *feme sole*, propelled herself into the realm of "solid" citizenship through property ownership. Moreover, because of her surname and because of the chronological as well as logistical proximity to Prestwould and slavery, we can determine that Vicey Skipwith was a former enslaved African Virginian on the Skipwith plantation (see note # 10 where additional evidence from contemporary

local informants and census data situate Vicey Skipwith as a tenant and wage laborer at Prestwould). Many African Americans continued to live on the former plantations from Reconstruction through the Depression—the other two historical periods contextualized in this nomination (the period of slavery is the other historical marker). Indeed, as Patricia M. Samford maintains, "On postbellum and tenant plantations, freed African-Americans often continued to live in their former slave quarters or buildings…" (5). Such is the case for Vicey Skipwith and the rest of the early African American families who lived along Cox Road.

From U. S. Census records and the indication that her "skill" was that of a cook, it is logical to speculate that Vicey Skipwith had learned that skill and what would become her life work, from being a cook in the Prestwould household.[26] Despite having been born as chattel property into the exploitive and destructive institution of slavery, Vicey Skipwith sought to enmesh herself into the economic system of Reconstruction and property-owning citizenship. She carved out a life for herself through the purchase of real estate. Enslaved African Virginians did not have the right to freedom of contract. Now, with the advent of Emancipation and Reconstruction, African Americans had the right to the freedom of contract that is foremost manifested in the right to buy land. In particular, single black women assumed the right or legal freedom of contract with the purchase of real property. Whereas white unmarried women (*feme sole*) had control over their own property, race, gender and social status (unmarried) intersect profoundly for black women after the abolition of slavery. Such an intersection renders "the postbellum view of contract as synonymous with personal autonomy [that is] explicitly gendered…." (Hamilton 4). In the Early American Republic the law generally reflected that of English Common Law in which single women had limited property rights to contract and married women had property under the control of their husbands, unless wills were explicit regarding real property inheritance (as opposed to personal property).[27] Therefore central to the features that are representative of the historic event of Reconstruction is the purchase of the cabin property by a recently freed African American woman. Vicey Skipwith purchased 6 1/5 acres by her own volition—personal autonomy. Through the purchase of the property, Vicey Skipwith's action represents how the newly freed men and women reconsidered and reconceptualized the meaning of freedom (Stanley xi).[28] The cabin property was bought from J. J. Crowder for $62. The purchase from Crowder reflects Vicey Skipwith's economic ambition and the desire "to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor" in the "home place" along Cox Road. The relative value would be the equivalent of $1207 in 2005. Remarkably, Vicey Skipwith was able to amass the capital necessary for purchasing the cabin property. For most newly freed African Americans, accumulating enough capital to buy land required years of hard labor and the discipline of saving and thriftiness. Vicey Skipwith was among the "home place" people who bought property and paid taxes—despite the adversities of Reconstruction in Southside Virginia.

Furthermore, despite the class and social distinctions, or perhaps because of them, blacks and whites knew each other in the vicinity of Cabin Point—hence, Vicey Skipwith knew Fulwar Skipwith and his family, J. J. Crowder, and other long-standing white families in the Bluestone District that constituted the "home place" of these African American first families of Emancipation. Born ca. 1856, Vicey Skipwith appears in the U. S. Federal Census of 1870 for the first time—this was the first U. S. Census to record African Americans by name as full citizens (freedmen were recorded in the census data prior to 1870, but slaves were not recorded by name). Vicey Skipwith was not the first African Virginian in the Bluestone District of Mecklenburg County to buy land from J. J. Crowder or Fulwar Skipwith.[29] Tax assessment records indicate that formerly enslaved individuals such as Ransom Burwell, Richard Skipwith, Patsy Skipwith, G. W. Hardy, Ras Sydnor, Christina Sydnor (she bought property in Boydton, eleven miles away), Thomas Fuller and others purchased property along Cox Road from Fulwar Skipwith and other whites.[30]

Noted historian Ira Berlin and others maintain that enslaved Africans established a level of personal and emotional proprietorship for the land even before the arrival of Emancipation. Many once enslaved African Americans reappropriated the significance of the "home place" in the form of land ownership and owning the cabin that had once been a dehumanizing "slave's quarter." Interdisciplinary perspectives—history, sociology, education and literary studies, for example—attest to the sense of pride, work, and hope that African Americans sought during Reconstruction—out of the memory of slavery. For example, the famous nineteenth century writer Charles W. Chestnutt identifies the notion of property and identity in one of his singularly crafted short stories, "The Doll" where the protagonist remembers how: His father had been a slave. Freed by the Civil War, he had entered upon the new life with the zeal and enthusiasm of his people at the dawn of liberty, which seem, in the light of later discouragements, so pathetic in the retrospect. The *chattel aspired to own property*; the slave, forbidden learning, to educate his children. He had worked early and late, had saved his money with thrift equal to that of a German immigrant, and had sent his children regularly to school. (italics for emphasis, Chestnutt 250)

In particular, despite the vestiges of common law regarding gender-specific ownership of land in the larger society still wrapped in the "genteel tradition," this consciousness of land ownership also was intriguingly appropriated by unmarried black women. To reiterate, African American individuals and families bought and sold parcels of land during Reconstruction that had been a part of the Prestwould estate. They created distinct social groups –the "home place" along Cox Rod. For example, the father-in-law of Parker Sydnor, Ransom Burwell, and the grandfather of Cora Irene Burwell Sydnor Shields (mid-twentieth century owner of the cabin property) bought fifteen acres of land from Fulwar Skipwith on Cox Road in the vicinity of the cabin property in 1881 (Deed Book 43, pp 493-494).

Land tax assessment records demonstrate that property-owning African Americans were listed separately from property-owning whites within each county district in Virginia beginning in 1891. Preprinted folio sheets that recorded property taxes collected were marked "white" and "colored." Segregated distinctions regarding real estate remained in Virginia law until the mid-twentieth century.[31] As *feme sole*, Vicey Skipwith made a significant contribution to the economy of Bluestone District with the purchase of her land and to that sense of "home place" –an association with land on which she had labored before Emancipation. The lives of ex-slaves were transformed because of Emancipation, but also because of the right to own property—the rites of citizenship. Dylan C. Penningroth argues that the propensity for slaves to own property dates to the antebellum. Making the argument for slaves' property ownership becomes relevant for the subsequent historical moments after slavery: "Property ownership brought black culture closer to the individualism and nuclear family structure of European Americans, values and practices that better prepared blacks for the new modalities of freedom than did the old "community" of the slave quarters" (Penningroth 7). Such a claim, however, was not universal. There were areas in which the old "community" of the slave quarters transitioned into the "home place" of freedom, struggle outside the memory of slavery, and the pursuit of property ownership. Bluestone District is one of these areas of the transitioned "home place."

Criterion B – Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor

In this instance of geographical space and recognized historical events emerges the figure of Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor who lived in the log cabin with his children and whose daughters eventually purchased the 6 1/5 acres on which the cabin is situated. Parker Sydnor became known in Halifax and Mecklenburg Counties for his stone carving

business. His significance lies not only in his profession as a stone carver, but more important as a literate man, despite his alleged birth during slavery. (Sydnor's birth date is not uncertain; it is variously given as 1854 or 1866.) The "heroic moment" in American history for former slaves, was the acquisition of literacy—a further manifestation of freedom. Within slavery or after the escape (or manumission) from slavery, literacy was the means through which to "write" oneself into humanity (Gates and Davis 1985). It had been illegal throughout the institution of slavery for enslaved men and women to learn how to read and write—literacy was potential power and definitive empowerment. Despite the fact that ninety-six percent of the enslaved population could not read or write, there was persistence in trying to "cipher" and to "read my title clear." Renowned slave narratives such as the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs emphasize the importance of the pursuit of literacy within the quest for freedom and citizenship. Literacy was not simply a matter of aligning or identifying with a white reading audience. Literacy allowed enslaved African Virginians and their progeny to move from object to agency. As the raw tools of agency, "…reading and writing were keys to citizenship on a very fundamental level" (Reyes 121). At different intervals in his life, Parker Sydnor lived with his family or daughter in the log cabin on Cox Road and his name as a cultural legacy became associated with the cluster of African American families living in the vicinity of Cabin Point during the twentieth century and into the twentieth first century.

Parker Sydnor, Descendants and Fictive Fin

Oral informants, octogenarians and nonagenarians, living in the vicinity of Cox Road (Route 701) have a memory of Parker Sydnor.[32] Parker Sydnor was very well known in Charlotte, Mecklenburg, and Halifax Counties because of his tombstone carving business that was connected to the extensive network of African American churches and funeral parlors in the area. Local informants who possess a living memory of Parker Sydnor associate the cabin with him, although the property was legally in the name of the Vicey Skipwith estate until 1959. Thus, Patrick Robert Sydnor and Lovice "Vicey" Skipwith were contemporaries and, of course, knew each other from Bluestone District as fictive kin. Fictive Kin is a term used to refer to individuals that are unrelated by either birth or marriage, who have an emotionally significant relationship with another individual that would take on the characteristics of a family relationship.

Oral history informants in Mecklenburg County responding to questions about the association of Parker Sydnor to the Cabin site include: Mrs. Marie Cook (Clarksville, VA), who "as a little girl… remembered Parker Sydnor from that log cabin over there" (August 2005). On two different occasions Mrs. Doris Hester indicated that she remembered Parker Sydnor in the thirties and forties because "he lived in the log cabin. I also remember the Fullers [Henrietta and Tom Fuller] … they lived there sometime in the thirties and forties when I used to go to St. Matthew School [on Cox Road]. My parents and the Fullers were friends. He came to our house all the time. Then his wife died and he married a Mrs. Sneed from Henderson, South Carolina…. I also remember the Goodes [Bennie Goode] who lived there in the 1940s. Goode had many daughters. I used to walk to the cross road [from Jeffress] and I remember them because I stopped at the cross road [intersection of present day Wilbourne Road and Morgan Farm Road] every morning and we girls would walk together to school…" (Interview August 1, 2006). Eventually the Fullers bought property adjacent to the log cabin site. Mrs. Annie Allen, Mrs. Hester, and Mr. Charlie Smith, all of Clarksville, Virginia confirmed (July 2006) that Parker Sydnor lived in the log cabin intermittently during the twentieth century. The same informants also stated that Bennie Goode and his family lived at the cabin before they bought property in another area of Cox Road. Mrs. Fannie Coleman (Halifax County) who is ninety-two years of age knew Parker

Sydnor and called him Uncle Parker (September 2006). She also indicates that he remarried twice late in life (to Hester Womack and then to Barbara Logan) and allegedly there is a son of Parker Sydnor who is still alive and living in New York City. An undated newspaper clipping from the Halifax Gazette states that Parker Sydnor had been in the tombstone business for forty years. The date of the newspaper is estimated to be ca. 1945.

Some of the tombstones that Parker Sydnor carved are still standing in church cemeteries such as St. Matthew Baptist Church (Clarksville, VA) and Spanish Grove (Scottsburg, VA). The markings on the tombstones attest to Sydnor's literacy. He carved out sentences along with the relevant dates of the deceased. Sydnor was a stone cutter and tombstone marker—he chiseled the stones and carved markings into the stone. Sydnor's work was practical and his work is important because it is evidence—if not an elusive autobiographical artifact—of his life work and the pride that he had in his work. Perhaps he knew that, like an undertaker, he would always have work. Sydnor's carved tombstones are similar to the work of David Drake, the enslaved North Carolinian potter who inscribed on his pots couplets and other kinds of encoded verses that were actually subversive. While Parker Sydnor's carved gravestones may not be museum pieces, they attest to literacy, endeavor and the ambition to work. Parker's gravestones are simple and rotund pieces ranging two to three feet in height. There are frequent misspellings on the lettered stones, but sentences and names clearly indicate a sense of purpose of form, creativity and function. The still standing tombstones (scattered throughout Halifax and Mecklenburg Counties' church cemeteries) are tangible evidences of Parker Sydnor's persistence for entrepreneurship, active engagement with reading and writing, the art of stone carving, and with the ethics of hard work.[33]

Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor was first married to Betsy Burwell (ca. 1868-1920) and they had six children. Born into slavery or immediately after Emancipation, in Halifax County, Virginia, Parker Sydnor was able to attend school during Reconstruction. According to the 1870 U. S. Census, the first census to name and index African Americans as legal citizens, he was "at school." The attainment of literacy in this historical context is remarkable for two reasons: Parker Sydnor and Betsy Burwell Sydnor both were children of parents who had been enslaved, yet they managed to get an education during Reconstruction; and Betsy Burwell Sydnor, attained a level of literacy despite the prevalent gender bias of the larger society about "schooling" for girls." Literacy is a key factor in the context of ethnohistoric data relating to community and cultural properties for formerly enslaved African Americans.

Consistent with previous census data, in the 1920 U. S. Federal Census both Parker Sydnor and Betsy Burwell Sydnor are listed as "able to read and write." A tombstone carver with a business and atelier in Mecklenburg and Halifax Counties, Parker Sydnor lived on Cox Road in the 1920s and also inhabited the cabin towards the end of his life. Sydnor's daughter, Cora Irene Burwell Sydnor Shields (1900-1976) was deeded the property on which the cabin is situated and also lived in the cabin. Parker Sydnor and his family ascended from slavery to citizenship in the decades following the Civil War: Their descendants moved from sharecropper poverty during Reconstruction and the Depression to social and economic affluence in the late twentieth century and beyond.

Bethenia Burwell Sydnor Rogers was the sister of Cora Irene Burwell Sydnor Shields and legal and oral accounts confirm that one sister conveyed the property to another for "$5.00 and other valuable consideration which has been paid in full" (Deed Book 167, p. 56). Bethenia and Cora Irene had a collateral kinship with Vicey Skipwith and they were all from Cabin Point. A receipt for Mecklenburg County state taxes and local levies indicate that in 1947 Cora Irene paid the amount of $2.58 on behalf of Vicey Skipwith on the cabin property.

Cora Irene Burwell Sydnor Shields died "intestate December 1976 leaving as her sole heirs at law four children,

namely: BETTIE S[hields]. REYES, IRENE S[hields] Douglas, Paul Shields and Larry Shields (Deed Book 270 p. 181). The log cabin property was conveyed to Bettie Shields Reyes, (daughter of Cora Irene (Burwell) Sydnor Shields) on June 20, 1977.

Thus, the cabin property once owned by the Sir Peyton Skipwith estate, and then purchased during Reconstruction by J. J. Crowder & wife, then by a former slave of Prestwould, Vicey Skipwith, whose collateral and fictive kin owned and intermittently maintained the property, continues to be owned by a direct descendant of Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor. Moreover, the surrounding Cox Road vicinity continues to have African American families who are descendants of African American "first" families who gathered and inhabited or built the small dwellings along Cox Road after Emancipation in their efforts at nurturing the "home place" into citizenship and freedom.

Until the 1930s, the intersection at the Clarksville-Chase City road continued to be listed as Cabin Point and the road continued with its nineteenth century name, Cox Road (1930 U.S. Census). The log cabin property remained in the estate name of Vicey Skipwith until 1959 and has continued in the lineage of her collateral descendants and fictive kin of Burwell, Sydnor, Shields, and Reyes families.

The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin Represents an African American Community's Historically Rooted Customs: History-telling and Memory

The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin property represents cultural attributes of an African American community in the Bluestone District of Mecklenburg County that are historically rooted in what Michael Vlach describes as a "resident slave community" –that community of African Americans who lived and labored along Cox Road in the shadow of the big house. Despite the harshness of their lives, "they seemed to have drawn their coherence from the deep well-spring of a shared African American cultures and its inventory of expressive forms….the creation of their own residential domains has been an achievement that has been consistently overlooked" (Vlach 230). Cabin Point was a "home place" for newly freed men and women as early as 1865. Their ancestors had labored on the farms and at least one plantation, that of Prestwould, in Mecklenburg County. The small parcels of land had been purchased by the newly emancipated African Virginians and handed down through generations of family, collateral family and "home place" neighbors.

Although to outsiders, the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin has remained "hidden in plain view," the beliefs, practices, and customs of a local living community have passed down the memory of the people whose people were enslaved African Virginians and who are remembered as having been connected to a cabin that gave them urgent shelter at one time or another. There is a dynamic relationship between tangible and intangible values associated to the entity of the property as memory and ethos. The beliefs and customs in this instance are that of the place (tangible) and space (intangible) of the "home place" along Cox Road that unconsciously, conveniently, or purposefully maintained a community of the same family names through intermarriage, extended family, and fictive kin. For these families whose ancestors were once "African Virginians" and long-term residents, Cox Road, Cabin Point and Bluestone District—the encompassing "home places"—are the spaces that reflect the ethnic heritage of rural African Americans.

While many of the descendants of the earlier residents migrated north and beyond, family names have remained along Cox Road in spirit, if not in person. In other words, many of the families who live in the vicinity of Cabin Point and

the former, Cox Road, have also left; but whether present or absent, they can with the pride of site of memory, trace their descent from their ancestors who lived in the "resident slave community." Indeed, some kinds of traditional cultural significance also may be retained regardless of how the surroundings of a property may have changed. Therefore, while many homes of African Americans and Anglo Americans along what is now called Wilbourne Road are newer, renovated, or being built, the Sydnor Cabin remains "hidden in plain view" historical artifact of the "home place" that has a living memory--an "unwritten oral history" on the site of memory.

Criterion C – Architecture

While log cabins for enslaved people were not generally built for permanency, many cabins were built with careful attention to detail by skilled enslaved African Virginian carpenters and stone masons. The enslaved African Virginians of Prestwould were undoubtedly skilled craftsmen. The Sydnor Log Cabin, a sturdy and well built, possibly antebellum dwelling, survives remarkably intact. The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin displays and embodies distinctive characteristics of a period, architectural type and method of construction. The Sydnor Cabin is a one- and one-half-story log building with a side-gabled roof and one-room-with-loft configuration. Its overall appearance, workmanship, especially in the creation of the V notches and log joinery, as the joints are consistently tight and remain close fitting. The Parker Sydnor Log Cabin is similar to other cabins built by Skipwith workers at Prestwould and, although its construction date and builder are unknown, may represent the skilled workmanship of those African Virginians who were enslaved at Prestwould. In particular, the exterior chimney of the log cabin built into the west wall is of stone, composed of cut blocks and fieldstone with a brick stack in American bond. The stones used at Prestwould were quarried on the plantation by African Virginian stone masons. Stones from the same quarry define the finely constructed walls leading to and surrounding the main entrance of Prestwould. Although deteriorated in some areas, the wall still stands and reminds visitors of the skill of the enslaved stone masons who labored there.

The Skipwith Papers contain numerous references to hiring slave masons between 1794 and 1797… (Samford 2.) Historically the stone walls defined and created what architectural historian Dell Upton terms an "articulated processional landscape" or in this instance, the "plantation avenue" leading up to the entrance of the big house (Upton 66). The "processional landscape" as Vlach describes it further indicated "the centrality of the planters" and "[kept] them aloof from any visitors behind a series of physical barriers that simultaneously functioned as social buffers" (Vlach 8). "Plantation avenue" as a class-oriented space in this processional landscape is the ubiquitous private road that impressively winds its way to the big house on every plantation. Prestwould maintained its "plantation avenue" and the paved road now has the modernized and authorized name of Prestwould Drive. The crumbling ruins of the stone wall, like dead shadows still among the now uncultivated growth of trees, are a staunch reminder of the past—relics of people and an era. Stone masons of African Virginian lineage who built the Prestwould manor and the still-standing stone wall leading to "Skipwith's big gate"—probably also built the masonry and brick chimney of the Sydnor Cabin that is in remarkably good condition.[34] The stone masons constructed the chimney with stones from the same quarry as that of the manor and its surrounding stone wall. Moreover, the distinctive characteristics and workmanship of the chimney embody the specific vernacular architectural design fabricated by Prestwould African Virginians as a definitive example of another kind of housing that existed during slavery ---in back of the big house. The Sydnor Cabin, therefore, represents a particular design philosophy and function of that historical era.

Archaeological Potential of the Property Site

As indicated on historic maps, Prestwould had outlying 18th and 19th century slave quarters. The former quarters of the plantation were archaeologically excavated (Samford 1992; 2001). Because late 19th and early 20th century African Americans lived in the vicinity of Prestwould as tenants and wage laborers and later many of the "first" families moved away, many of them not too far from the "home place," there is a rich potential for archaeological investigation on the log cabin property. "Following the same families archaeologically from slavery to freedom [and beyond] would provide an excellent opportunity for charting change" (Samford 21). Decidedly, the Parker Sydnor Log Cabin property is still a site of the historically challenged and culturally enriched past, that sits "hidden in plain view" waiting to be acknowledged because of that past and waiting for the future.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The 4.41 acres being nominated is identified as Parcel A on Mecklenburg County Tax Map 126-A-38 on the tax parcel maps for Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the 4.4 acres owned by Dr. Angelita D. Reyes, and includes the resources historically part of the property. The boundaries include the log cabin, the storage house, the out house and the chicken house.

[1] Deed Book 309, p. 818. N.P.B. 3, page 48 Portion of Tax Parcel 126-A-38, 2003. Mecklenburg County Clerk's Office, Boydton, Virginia.
[2] The official historical years of Reconstruction are 1865-1877. The actual narrative years of the people's traumatic and challenging journey into citizenship and legal freedom extend beyond 1877 and well towards the end of the nineteenth century.
[3] All subsequent references are to the 1798 John Hill Plat of Prestwould located at the Prestwould Foundation archives in Clarksville, Virginia and at the Library of Virginia; 1864 Civil War map of Mecklenburg County.

[4] This place name of Cabin Point here is not to be confused with the other historic Cabin Point located in Surry County, VA.
[5] Kenneth Stamp. "Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution Through the Civil War." Series L: Selections from the Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary. Part 3: Skipwith Family Papers, 1760-1977.
[6] Although entail and primogeniture were abolished, 1776 and in 1785 respectively, the practice continued. See C. Ray Keim, "Primogeniture and Entail in Colonial Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly, Volume XXV, No. 4* (October 1968): 550-551.
[7] Will Book 27, pp. 489-490. Mecklenburg County Clerk's Office, Boydton, Virginia.
[8] Deed Book 41, page 556. I thank Mrs. Doris Hester for bringing this 1877 land transaction and the St. Matthew Baptist Church connection to Prestwould via Fulwar Skipwith to my attention (November 26, 2006). Mrs. Cora Irene Sydnor Shields was a lifetime member of St. Matthew Baptist Church. The Church still serves the Bluestone community in the same location; and the Rev. Delmont Harris is the present pastor. Using the nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) value, $5.50 has the relative 2005 value of $1,319.26. http://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/compare/result.php
[9] In the U. S. Census of 1870 Vicey Skipwith's name will appear as "Lovice." Thereafter, in the records her name is written as Vicey. Oral history informants recall the name Vicey and do not mention "Lovice." Black and white women were named Vicey or Lovice during this historical period. And some men—black and white-- in the census data are listed as Vicey.
[10] Carter L. Hudgins and Edward Chappell. National Historic Landmarks Form. Prestwould. 1 September 2001. p. 10.
[11] Telephone interview with Mrs. Margaret Harris, 17 November 2006. Danville, Virginia. Certain branches of Harris family genealogy (Anglo and African American) can be traced back to the late seventeenth century in Southside Virginia.
[12] Toni Morrison. "The Site of Memory," in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir, edited by William Zinsser* (1987).
[13] http://www.worldwidewords.org/qa/qa-rod1.htm. Accessed on September 26, 2006.
[14] These figures are approximations considering that the scale has been altered by photocopying from the original. The driving distance is 1.4 miles—still, a distance that can be walked.
[15] Carter L. Hudgins and Edward Chappell. National Historic Landmarks Form. Prestwould. 1 September 2001. p. 16.
[16] Included with this nomination are two full sized copies of the 1864 Gilmer Civil War map of Mecklenburg County obtained from the Virginia Historical Society. The well known 1870 Map of Mecklenburg County is based on the1864 Gilmer map.
[17] For further information on plantation statistics see: Ulrich B. Phillilps, *Life and Labor in the Old South*; John B. Boles, *Black Southerners, 1619-1869*, p. 75.
[18] The term "African Virginian" is used as a historical marker to reference the event of American slavery. The term African American (without hyphenation) is used as a general reference to Americans of African descent.
[19] Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison depicts this sense of domestic search during Reconstruction in her acclaimed novel, *Beloved.*
[20] See: Shannon Sheila Mahoney, "Pay for Labor: Socioeconomic Transitions of Freedpeople and the Archaeology of African American Life, 1863-1930." Masters Thesis College of William and Mary, 2004. This unpublished thesis analyzes the contracts of newly freed African Americans from Prestwould: "Using two contracts in Virginia as a case study reveals that freed people lived through a wide range of experiences even within the oppressive system of sharecropping and tenancy. By comparing two contracts created in Virginia on January 1, 1870 regional, work and social differences become apparent. Archaeology has the potential to reveal differences in family and community life in terms of material culture, housing, and health by applying these results to African American postbellum sites."

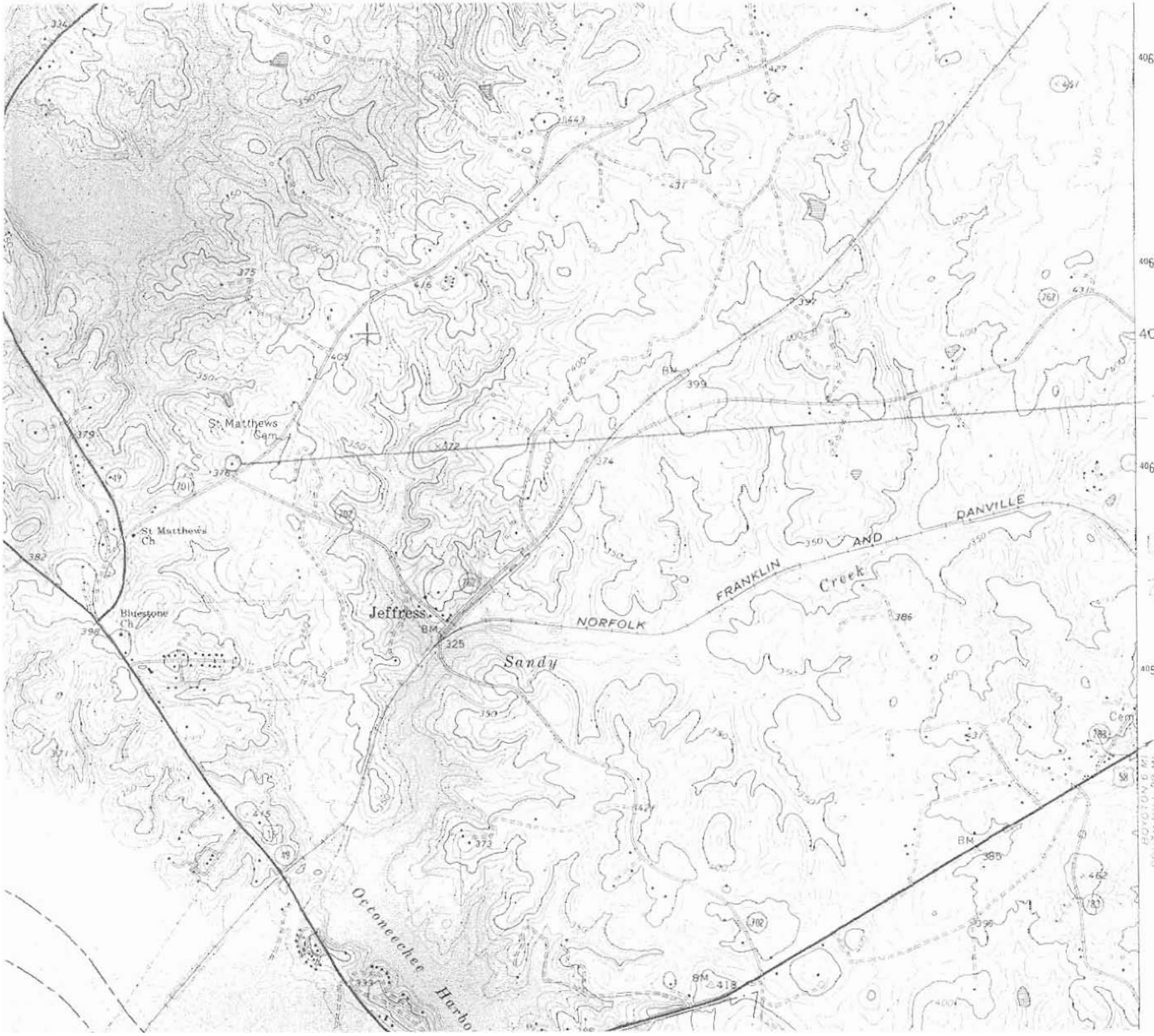
[21] Telephone interview with Mrs. Margaret Harris, 17 November 2006; Danville, Virginia. Time did not allow the interviewer to pursue the meaning of the statement that "Johnny Skipwith was from Prestwould" with Mrs. Harris. However, the informed speculation to her meaning is noted above. Mrs. Harris worked at Prestwould from about 1926-1931 as a child. Finally, census data confirms that Johnny Skipwith's parents were tenants and sharecroppers at Prestwould. His great grandfather, John Skipwith worked as a sharecropper at Prestwould in 1870. I'm deeply appreciative of Shannon Mahoney for sending me her transcription of the contract that Fulwar Skipwith made with former enslaved African Virginians for "wage labor" at Prestwould in 1870 and John Skipwith (the great grandfather) is listed on the 1870 sharecropper contract and he is listed in the 1880 U. S. Federal Census in Bluestone District (with **Vicey Skipwith** as his sister). The preparer of this nomination as a child knew Mrs. Harris's relative (uncle) Johnny Skipwith.

[22] For reference to the full military order that was in effect for only one year, see: "Forty Acres and A Mule." http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/zmex/reconstruction/40acres/ps_so15.html
Special Field Orders, No. 15 Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi, 16 January 1865. Orders and Circulars, ser. 44 Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives.

[23] Deed Book 46, pp 262-263. Mecklenburg County Clerk's Office, Boydton, Virginia.
[24] 1880 U. S. Federal Census Record, Bluestone District Mecklenburg County, Virginia.
[25] See also, Patricia De Laine Crowder Yaw, *The Harness Makers: A Book about the Crowder Family in America*.
[26] The 1930 U. S. Census indicates that Vicey Skipwith was married for the first time at 14 years of age. However, no where in the 1888 deed is there any reference to Vicey Skipwith being a widow. Most likely she was not a widow and because of that she would not have been able to make that claim locally—i.e in the Mecklenburg County Court records because she was known locally. The 1910 U.S. Census data it is recorded that she is a widow. At this historical juncture, marriage continued to be the most respectable status for a woman, therefore, widowhood was a respectable status that represented once married status. Vicey Skipwith claims widowhood in all the extant census data. No marriage certificates yet have been located. Furthermore, confirming that Vicey Skipwith was not free before 1865, the 1860 Census for free persons of color was researched and her name does not appear on this schedule. There is no evidence that she was a free woman of color before 1865. All the census records are consistent with her date of birth as 1856. She was also a contemporary of Parker Sydnor.
[27] In 1848 New York State claimed the Married Women's Property Act which became a model for many other states. By 1900 every state had given married women substantial control over their property and inheritance.
[28] In *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth Century South*, Dylan C. Penningroth argues that even though obtaining legal freedom outweighed owning material things for enslaved African Americans, owning property still mattered to them. Yet with Emancipation legal freedom becomes manifested in the right to own land because of the right to make a contract—in this case, the right to have a deed.
[29] There are numerous cases of African American men and women who were formerly enslaved buying property soon after the abolition of slavery. See for example, Ellen Eslinger's "Freedom Without Independence: The Story of A Former Slave and Her Family."
[30] Ransom Burwell was the great great grandfather of Dr. Angelita D. Reyes, the owner of the Log Cabin property and preparer of this nomination. Ras Sydnor was a great great uncle of Dr. Reyes.

[31] When viewed in the context of social justice and desegregation, however, this is a sinister instance in which the policy of segregation/Jim Crow law is a convenient asset and welcomed because the researcher is able to identify quickly and easily land-owning African Americans in Virginia's property history. When the Vicey Skipwith deed was first identified by the current preparer of this nomination and Julian Hudson in the Mecklenburg County Clerk's Office there was speculation that "Vicey" was the name of a white male, historically unknown relative, of the established and chronicled Prestwould/Skipwith lineage. Julian Hudson confirmed from his genealogical database of the Skipwith family that "Vicey Skipwith" was not a white Skipwith. As has already been further documented from various sources in this nomination, Vicey Skipwith had been an enslaved African Virginian woman on the Skipwith plantation.

[32] The term "rememory" is borrowed from Toni Morrison. Rememory is more than remembering according to Morrison; it is the active engagement of living memory—it is a noun and a verb intra-dependent of "to remember.". See *Beloved* p. 36.
[33] Patrick Robert Sydnor is buried in the cemetery of Spanish Grove Baptist Church. Ironically for someone whose life work was making tombstone markers for others, his grave site is unmarked or lost. The locals, nevertheless, know that he is buried at Spanish Grove.
[34] The quote "Skipwith's big gate" refers to the 1820 location of an Episcopal church (St. James) that was "...on the left side of the road leading from Cabin Point to Clarksville, about midway between Cabin Point and Skipwith's big gate" quoted in Susan L. Bracey (114). On the way to Clarksville, Cabin Point is on the right side of the road and even though it originated as a slave "quarter" the location is an intersection as early as 1820 that has become a marker for direction and local geographical reference.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